

EDITORIAL COMMENT



OUR FRIENDS IN THE NEW YEAR

Few people are so ignorant or so callous that the coming in of the new year does not bring at least a moment of retrospection. The obligations of life vary with the environment of people. We of the nursing profession occupy a unique relationship in many directions. We have to consider our obligations to the profession of which we are members, so arranging our lines of life that no act of ours shall bring dishonor upon it. It is well to cast a look backward over the year which is past, to search the record of our inner consciousness for possible flaws in our professional attitude. Have we done our duty in the organizations of which we are members? Have we been absolutely ethical in our relations with other nurses?

Sometimes we think nurses become very indifferent to their obligations to their friends, especially those who are separated from their own people and are living temporarily among strangers. Absolute integrity in living is very difficult. It seems to matter so little whether or not one is absolutely honest and perfectly sincere and always dignified in our relations with people who are not very much to us.

To the young nurse who is perhaps only recently established we want to give just a word of warning. A little laxness here and there may not make very much difference to the other party, but the danger is to your own character. If, with the years, you do not grow in habits of self-control, self-denial, truthfulness, and sincerity, you are bound gradually to fall away from the standards which were taught you in your own home.

The old-time saying that "A man is known by the company he keeps" is just as true to-day as it ever has been. If we constantly associate with people who are intellectually and socially our inferiors and are habitually living down to their level we are bound to deteriorate. The mind, like the body, needs care, nourishment, and stimulation, and a certain amount of mental effort is necessary for its well-being. A great factor in our moral and intellectual progress is the impetus which we receive from intercourse with people of higher ideals and higher attainments than our own, therefore our familiar friends are, in a measure, our educators.

As we look back once more into the year that is closed, may we not well ask ourselves these questions: Have we been perfectly loyal and sincere in our relations with our friends? Have we given any one of them just cause to doubt our integrity? Have we given to them the best of our mind and heart and sympathy?

During the year which is to come we shall meet our old friends under new conditions, perhaps conditions that test our confidence in them to a great degree,—conditions of sorrow and conditions of happiness. We may meet new friends who will go with us to the end of the journey, bringing pleasure or pain into our lives according to the wisdom of our selection. We must give to the friends, both the old and the new, that unwavering affection, sincerity, and

trust that we look for in them, and the obligations of friendship demand that they shall not be disappointed in us. To the old and the new we wish a "Happy New Year."

SPLENDID WORK DONE

It was our privilege to be the guest of honor at the annual luncheon of the Toronto General Alumnae Association, of which event mention is made in another column. We have attended many gatherings of nurses in different parts of the world, both social and professional in character, but we have never seen a gathering of women of greater dignity, intelligence, and cultivation than came together upon this occasion.

As a social function the luncheon was exquisitely arranged, and the responses to the toasts, even from the youngest members, were of a high order of merit.

The closing months of the year have been notable in the history of the Toronto General Hospital. In connection with the graduating exercises was celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the organization of the Training-School. Miss Snively has been at the head of the school for seventeen years, and to her may justly be accredited the high standard of development reached by the nurses of the Toronto Hospital.

Miss Snively is one of those of our able women whose field of labor has been in an old building with difficult conditions to contend with. In the nurses' home which stands as a monument to her efforts we see the guiding hand of a cultivated woman who keenly appreciates the influence of refining surroundings in the education of the young women under her care.

DURING the past year too many of our notable women of experience have shown signs of breaking in health. There is something radically wrong with our hospital and training-school management which compels a woman to lay aside active work just when she has gained that invaluable experience which comes with time. Is it the nature of the work or is it the conditions under which the work is done? Is not much of the wear and tear unnecessary? The problem will never be solved for us, but the solution of it must be worked out from within our ranks.

THE GUILD OF ST. BARNABAS

WITH the present number the department devoted to the interests of the Guild of St. Barnabas is opened, under the editorship of Miss S. M. Durand, a graduate of the Massachusetts General Hospital Training-School, who at the present time holds a position in the Boston Public Library. At the annual meeting of the guild, held in Chicago in November, it was decided after very thorough discussion that the *News-Letter*, which has been the official organ of the guild for many years, should be discontinued, and an offer of space in *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*, to be in charge of an editor appointed by the guild, was favorably considered.

We make this announcement with much pride and pleasure, feeling that the usefulness of the *JOURNAL* is greatly broadened by this representation, and we call attention again to the fact that the official announcements of the four great national organizations of nurses in the United States are now made through the pages of this *JOURNAL*.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING is ostensibly the property of the Trained Nurses' Associated Alumnae of the United States, and is conducted by a committee and stock company composed of its members. In the Department of Official Reports, which is directly under the editorship of its secretary, Miss Mary E. Thornton, whose address is 143 East Thirty-fifth Street, New York City, is to be found each month official communications from various kinds of nursing organizations, National, State, and local. All communications for this department should be sent to Miss Thornton direct, should be signed by the full name and title of the writer, and should be written only on one side of the sheet, as concisely as possible.

The monthly reports of local meetings we consider to be of very great value to the nursing profession, as they are full of suggestions that are exceedingly helpful to officers who are arranging programmes either for entertainment or improvement. We hope to see this department universally patronized by the local and smaller organizations. Many of the younger organizations, where the members are also of the younger generation, seem to be more wide-awake and original in their methods than the societies of some of our older schools. Each can learn much from the other through the Department of Official Reports.

THE NURSE AS A FACTOR IN POLITICAL REFORM

AFTER the downfall of Tammany the public press commented to some extent upon the work of the "Settlements" as a factor in bringing about this great victory, and special mention was made of the fact that the women of the "Nursing Settlement" on Henry Street had been largely influential in rousing the women of upper New York to a knowledge of the terrible conditions that existed in the slum districts under Tammany rule.

This circumstance is of interest to the profession at large, for the reason that nurses, for the first time to our knowledge, are given recognition as political reformers, a place which we believe in the future they will fill with great honor.

The fact that the Mayor of Boston has nominated a woman to be Overseer of the Poor is another great step in political reform, and we believe that this position could be filled to especial advantage by trained nurses, both in our large cities and our smaller towns, and even in the country districts.

We would like to see a trained nurse appointed as one of the assistants to the Health Officer in every large city where so much of the work of this department is done in connection with women and children. A successful trained nurse, as she comes towards middle life, is a woman of exceptionally well-balanced judgment, her sympathies are keen, her judgment is cool, and her familiarity with many phases of society make it impossible for her to be influenced by the sentimental picturesqueness of poverty. She sees the world more from a man's stand-point, but deals with its problems with that finer delicacy of touch which it is generally conceded women possess.

VALUABLE FOR REFERENCE

WE understand that a pupil has been selected at the Boston City Hospital to solicit subscriptions for this JOURNAL among the nurses of the school. We wish more of the superintendents of the large schools would follow Miss Drown's lead. All of our numbers contain valuable reference material. For instance, Dr. McCollom's paper in the December number, on "The Role of Insects in the Propagation of Disease," should be in the hands of every pupil as well as every graduate, as it opens the way to one of the greatest scientific discoveries of our

time, and one which will undoubtedly fill an important place in the control of the spread of disease during the coming century. We wish our nurses were keener in their appreciation of the scientific value of our numbers.

THE NEW JERSEY STATE ASSOCIATION

A LARGE and interested body of nurses responded to the call for a mass meeting held in the City Hospital of Newark, N. J., on December 4 to consider the question of the organization of a State association of nurses in New Jersey.

The meeting was called to order by Miss Gardner, of the Orange Memorial Training-School, who, upon motion, was made chairman. Miss Isabel McDonald, of St. Joseph's Hospital, of Paterson, was elected clerk of the meeting.

The presiding officer, after outlining briefly the object of the meeting and requesting a free expression of opinion from all present, called upon Miss L. L. Dock, of New York, to address the association. Miss Dock gave it as her opinion that a more dignified and solid foundation for such an association would be laid if the membership was a composite one, viz., by representation from all organized bodies of nurses, thus preserving the associations already formed at no small sacrifice of time and strength, and allowing the individual nurses located in remote districts to join as such, until there should be a sufficient number to form a local association, when their representation would be by delegate.

Following Miss Dock, Miss S. V. Nye, president of the New York Association, was called upon and spoke in favor of individual membership exclusively during the first few years of organization, leaving it to future development for change of form if on these lines the society became too unwieldy in numbers.

Miss Dock's plan is practically that outlined in the pages of this JOURNAL in the December number, and would seem to us to be by far the most practical, as it contains all of the advantages of the individual plan without the disadvantages. We believe that the argument used on another page, that the individual membership is desirable because it promises a larger revenue, is not the best basis upon which to form a society having for its ultimate and educational and professional advancement. We admit that the financial aspect is important, but it should not be the controlling factor in the situation.

THE NEW YORK STATE MEETING

THE announcement is made on another page of the second meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association, to be held in the Academy of Medicine, 17 West Forty-third Street, New York City, at ten o'clock on Thursday and Friday, January 30 and 31.

As the principal business to be transacted at this meeting is the completion of the organization by the adoption of by-laws, and a decision as to what shall constitute membership, we think it is of very great importance that the nursing organizations which were represented at the meeting in Albany should send the same delegates to this second meeting, as it is perfectly obvious that the body of women who thrashed out the constitution adopted in Albany are better qualified to deal with the subject of by-laws than an entirely new set of delegates would be, strangers to each other and unfamiliar with the work done at the first meeting.

WE are very pleased to announce that Miss Julia F. Stewart, of 494 Ontario Street, Toronto, Can., has consented to act as the representative of Ontario on the JOURNAL staff of collaborators.